

will have to embrace our common humanity with humility and gratitude.

Hillary and I were proud to sign the Birmingham Pledge in 1998. We applaud this effort to recognize its importance nationally. We urge all Americans to use National Birmingham Pledge Week as a powerful tool for helping to build the future of our dreams for all our children, a dream of one America.

NOTE: H.J. Res. 102, approved November 9, was assigned Public Law No. 106-483.

Statement on the Death of Hosea Williams

November 17, 2000

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of an American foot soldier for freedom and a driving force for the Voting Rights Act, Hosea Williams. From his bravery in the fields of battle in World War II to his leadership in the civil rights struggle at home, Hosea Williams was a profile in courage. One of the greatest honors of my Presidency was walking across the Edmund Pettus Bridge with him on the 35th anniversary of the Selma march earlier this year. Hosea Williams dedicated his entire life to making sure we never take a detour on the road to freedom. He helped us all cross the bridge to a better and more just world. With his memory as a guide, we'll keep marching on. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends.

Statement on Signing Legislation To Establish a Memorial and Gardens in Honor of Frederick Douglass

November 17, 2000

I recently signed into law H.R. 5331, a bill "To authorize the Frederick Douglass Gardens, Inc., to establish a memorial and gardens on Department of the Interior lands in the District of Columbia or its environs in honor and commemoration of Frederick Douglass."

It is appropriate that the memorial and gardens be located in Washington, DC, the Nation's Capital, as Mr. Douglass' life was a testament to the democratic principles

upon which the Nation was founded. Born into slavery, Frederick Douglass became a renowned international spokesman for liberty, the abolition of slavery, and social reform. Throughout his life, he was a noted publisher of several periodicals and papers in which he discussed the political and social disenfranchisement of Americans of African ancestry. As an American truly committed to the Nation's progress toward the attainment of liberty and justice for all, Frederick Douglass recruited African-Americans for the Union Army during the Civil War; two of his sons served in the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, which was solely comprised of African-Americans. Moreover, Frederick Douglass served as the president of the Freedmen's National Bank, the U.S. Marshal for the District of Columbia, and in several diplomatic positions in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Because of his unyielding faith in and his commitment to the fundamental democratic principles of our Nation, I am pleased to approve this legislation honoring one of the Nation's great citizens.

NOTE: H.R. 5331, approved November 9, was assigned Public Law No. 106-479.

Remarks to the American Embassy Community in Hanoi

November 17, 2000

The President. Thank you very much. I want to thank Senator Kerry for what he said and for what he's done all these years and for being a wonderful friend to Hillary and me in many, many ways. And I want to thank Sandy Berger and our whole team in the White House and State Department for supporting this trip from the beginning. And I want to associate myself with what Hillary said—now that she's going to be a Senator, I can just let her give the speeches, and I can say, "I completely agree." And that will save everyone from having to hear two speeches. *[Laughter]*

But I do want to say a couple of things, if I might. First, I, too, want to thank you for the endless hours you have put in in preparation for this trip and for the work you have

done representing our Nation here in Vietnam. I want to thank especially the Vietnamese nationals who work at our Embassy and who, therefore, embody this new partnership we have worked so hard to build these last several years.

We started this process of reconstructing our relationship a long time ago, and I have been working at it now, with the people on this stage and others, for at least 8 years. And I'm very grateful to all of them. But I want to take my time tonight to say a special word of thanks to Pete Peterson.

Most everybody, I guess, in Vietnam knows that he was a fighter pilot here, that he was a prisoner of war here. You may know that his wife was 9 months pregnant with their third child when he came here. He was supposed to fly 100 missions, and he was shot down two-thirds of the way through. And by the time he got home, his son was 6 years old.

What you may not know is that when I met him, he was a Congressman from northern Florida, and he represented a district in which, I promise you, he was the only American in my party who would have ever been elected from that district. *[Laughter]* Otherwise, any normal person would have had to be a member of the other party.

And I remember the times we spent driving through his congressional district, talking about his commitment to public service and talking about how desperately he wanted us to have a new relation with Vietnam and how he wanted to embody that, going beyond.

So when the time came for a new Ambassador to be named, I literally only considered one person. America has, I don't know how many, 270-something million people; I only considered one person to be our Ambassador to Vietnam, and Pete agreed to do it.

Now, he gave all those speeches about letting go of the past and looking toward the future, and all we can change is the future. So he—one thing I like about Pete is, he always practices what he preaches. So he comes to Vietnam, meets Vi Le, and starts a new life. So you are the embodiment, madam, of the future for Pete, and we thank you, and we thank you for what you have done.

He traveled all over Vietnam, just like he traveled all over America, promoting this relationship. He worked on the POW/MIA issue. He worked to advance the economy of Vietnam. Three times he led the lobbying to get our Congress to support our Jackson-Vanik waiver. His enthusiasm is completely infectious.

I understand, Pete, today that CNN and BBC carried the signing of our bilateral trade agreement live at 3 a.m. Hanoi, and watch parties were held all over town. Now, that's pretty amazing.

I also want to thank him for the work he did to prevent injuries and accidents here with his safety campaign. And I want to express my sympathies, because I understand after you started this safety campaign, a mischievous television film crew caught you in a rare moment riding your motorcycle without a helmet. *[Laughter]* Now, that's something all of us who have been in public life can identify with. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank you for befriending the villagers in the area where you were shot down and joining them to inaugurate a school. And I want to thank those of you who work in this Embassy, especially those of you who have extended your tours from 2 years to 3. I want to thank the members of the American business community, apparently who have signed a resolution cautioning the new President not to change the Ambassador in Hanoi. *[Laughter]* That's good advice to the new President. *[Laughter]*

One of the most famous sayings of the Buddha is, "Never does hatred by hatred cease; hatred ceases by love alone." This is an eternal law. Even eternal laws have to be made real in the lives of particular people, and that is a law which has been made real in the life and service of Pete Peterson.

He doesn't know I'm going to do this today, but the Ambassador has been honored for his military service with the Silver Star, the Purple Heart, and the Legion of Merit for heroism in the uniform of his country. I think his service as Ambassador to Vietnam is the most important service he has ever rendered to the United States. And so, in the presence of all of his co-workers and friends and many of their rambunctious children, which makes it even better, I am going to

award Pete Peterson with the President's Citizen's Medal. And I would like the commander to read the citation and then bring the medal up here so I can give it to Pete.

[At this point, Lt. Comdr. Pat DeQuattro, USCG, Coast Guard Aide to the President, read the citation, and the President presented the medal to Ambassador Peterson. The Ambassador then made brief remarks.]

The President. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7 p.m. in the Ballroom at the Daewoo Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Ambassador Peterson's Vietnamese wife, Vi Le. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Ambassador Peterson. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by President Tran Duc Luong of Vietnam in Hanoi

November 17, 2000

Mr. President, Madam Luong, distinguished representatives of the Vietnamese Government, ladies and gentlemen: Let me thank you for your welcome to me and to my family and to our entire American delegation.

We are honored to join you in writing a new chapter in the relationship between the United States and Vietnam and grateful that this chapter has a happy beginning. Yes, the history we leave behind is painful and hard. We must not forget it, but we must not be controlled by it. The past is only what precedes the future, not what determines it.

America and Vietnam are making a new history today. A generation from now, people will look back on this time and see the American veterans who came back to Vietnam searching for answers about the past and the Vietnamese who enlisted them in building a common future. They will see the young Vietnamese students, eager to absorb all the world has to offer, and the young Americans who have come here to learn with them. They will see the entrepreneurs and the scientists and the conservationists and the artists, forging links between Vietnam and the world.

In short, people will look back and reach the same conclusion as the great Vietnamese

statesman Nguyen Trai when he said 500 years ago, "After so many years of war, only life remains."

Today, our people face a changing world and a changing life together, with the same basic aspirations and even some of the same worries. How can we seize the opportunities of a global economy while avoiding its turmoil? How can we open our doors to new ideas while protecting our traditions, our cultures, our way of life?

Globalization is bringing the world to Vietnam and also bringing Vietnam to the world. Films about life in Vietnam, from "The Scent of the Green Papaya" to "The Three Seasons" are winning awards all over the globe. The paintings of the Vietnamese artist Do Quang Em command fortunes at international art shows. The 200-year-old poems of Ho Xuan Huong are published in America, in English, in Vietnamese, and even in the original Nom, the first time ancient Vietnamese script has come off a printing press. Fashion designers like Armani and Calvin Klein base new collections on the traditional Vietnamese dress, the *ao dai*. Americans are tasting lemon grass, garlic chives, and even bitter melon, all of which, by the way, grow on a Vietnamese farm in our State of Virginia, just a 20-minute drive from the White House.

Mr. President, globalization also means that on the Internet, Americans can read the latest Vietnamese financial news or learn about the challenges in restoring Hanoi's Old Quarter or support the organizations working to preserve new species being found in the central highlands. It means we can download fonts in the Vietnamese language. Indeed, before long, sophisticated translation technologies will make the Internet a force for linguistic diversity, not uniformity.

When we open our doors, we not only let new ideas in; we let the talent and creativity and potential of our people out. That, too, will come to Vietnam. After just one day in your country, I am certain there will be no stopping the people of Vietnam as they gain the chance to realize their full potential. The people of the United States are happy that the time has come when we can be partners.

As "The Tale of Kieu" foretold, "Just as the lotus wilts, the mums bloom forth; time softens grief; and the winter turns to spring."